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WE'LL SEE ABOUT IT.

(FROM MRS. S. C. HALL'S SKETCHES.)

"WE'LL see about it!" From that simple sentence has arisen more evil to Ireland than any person, ignorant of the strange union of impetuosity and procrastination my countrymen exhibit, could well believe. They are sufficiently prompt and energetic where their feelings are concerned, but in matters of business, they almost invariably prefer *seeing about* to *DOING*.

I shall not find it difficult to illustrate this observation:—from the many examples of its truth, in high and in low-life, I select Philip Garraty.

Philip, and Philip's wife, and Philip's children, and all the house of Garraty, are employed from morning till night in *seeing about* every thing, and, consequently in *doing* nothing. There is Philip—a tall, handsome good-humoured fellow, of about five-and-thirty, with broad lazy-looking shoulders, and a smile perpetually lurking about his mouth, or in his bright hazel eyes, the picture of indolence and kindly feeling. There he is leaning over what was once a five-barred gate, and leads to the hag yard; his blue worsted stockings full of holes which the saggan, twisted half-way up the well-formed leg, fails to conceal; while his brogues (to use his own words,) if they do let the water in, let it out again. With what unstudied elegance does he roll that knotted twine, and then unroll it; varying his occupation, at times, by kicking the stones that once formed a wall into the stagnant pool, scarcely large enough for full-grown ducks to sail in.

But let us first take a survey of the premises.

The dwelling house is a long rambling abode, much larger than the generality of those that fall to the lot of small Irish farmers; but the fact is that Philip rents one of the most extensive farms in the neighbourhood, and ought to be "well to do in the world." The dwelling looks very comfortable, notwithstanding: part of the thatch is much decayed, and the rank weeds and damp moss nearly cover it; the door-posts are only united to the wall by a few scattered portions of clay and stone, and the door itself is hanging but by one hinge; the window-frames shake in the passing wind, and some of the compartments are stuffed with the crown of a hat or a "lock of straw," very unsightly objects. At the opposite side of the swamp is the hayyard gate, where a broken line of alternate palings and wall exhibit proof that it had formerly been fenced in; the commodious barn is almost roofless, and the other sheds pretty much in the same condition; the pig-sty is deserted by the grubbing lady, and her grunting prodigy, who are too fond of an occasional repast in the once-cultivated garden to remain in their proper abode; the listless turkeys, and contented, half-fatted geese, live at large and on the public; but the turkeys with all their shyness and modesty, have the best of it, for they mount the ill-built stacks, and select the grain, *a plaisir*.

"Give you good morrow, Mr. Philip; we have had showery weather lately."

"Och! all manner o' joy to ye, my lady! and sure ye'll walk in, and sit down, my woman will be proud to see ye. I'm sartin we'll have the rain soon agin, for it's every where like bad luck; and my throat's sore wid hurishing thim pigs out o' the garden—sorra' a thing can I do all day for watchin' thim."

"Why do you not mend the door of the sty?"

"True for ye, ma'am dear, so I would if I had the nails and I've been threat'nin' to step down to Mickey Bow, the smith, to ask him to *see about it*."

"I hear you've had a fine crop of wheat Philip."

"Thank God for all things! You may say that; we had my lady, a fine crop; but I have always the hight of ill luck somehow; upon my sowkins (and that's the hardest oath I swear) the turkeys have had the most of it; but I mean to *see about* setting it up safe to-morrow."

"But, Philip, I thought you sold the wheat standing, to the steward at the big house."

"It was all as one as sould, only it's a bad world, madam dear, and I've no luck. Says the steward to me, says he, I like to do things like a man of business, so, Mister Garraty, just draw up a bit of an agreement that you deliver over the wheat-field to me, on such a day, standing as it is, for such a sum; and I'll sign it for ye, and then there can be no mistake—only let me have it by this day week. Well, to be sure, I came home full o' my good luck, and tould the wife; and on the strength of it, she must have a new gown. And sure, says she, Miss Hennessy is just come from Dublin, wid

a shop-full o' goods; and on account that she's my brother's sister-in-law's first cousin, she'll let me have the first sight o' the things. and I can take my pick, and we'll have plinty of time to *see about* the agreement to-morrow. Well, I don't know how it was, but the next day we had no paper, nor ink, nor pens in the house; I meant to send the gossoon to Miss Hennessy's for all—but forgot the pens. So, when I was seeing about the 'greement, I bethought of the ould gander; and while I was pulling as beautiful a pen as ever ye laid y'er two eyes upon, out of his wing, he tattered my hand with his bill in such a manner that sorra a pen I could hold for three days. Well, one thing or another put it off for ever so long, and at last I wrote it out like print, and takes it myself to the steward. "Good evening to you, Mr. Garraty, says he. Good evening kindly, sir, says I, and I hope the woman that owns ye, and all y'er good family's well. All well, thank ye, Mr. Garraty, says he. I've got the 'greement here, sir, says I, pulling it out as I thought—but behold ye—I only catch the paper it was wrapt in, to keep it from the dirt of the tobacco, that was loose in my pocket for want of a box (saving y'er presence;) so I turned what little things I had in it out, and there was a grate hole that ye might drive all the parish rats through, at the bottom, which the wife promised to see about mending, as good as six months before. Well, I saw the sneer on his ugly mouth (for he's an Englishman,) and I turned it off with a laugh, and said air holes were comfortable in hot weather, and sich-like jokes, and that I'd go home and make another 'greement. "Greement! for what?—says he, laying down his grate outlandish pipe. Whew, may-be ye don't know, says I. Not I, says he. The wheat-field, says I. Why says he, didn't I tell you then, that you must bring the 'greement to me by that day week?—and that was, by the same token (pulling a red memorandum book out of his pocket) let me see—exactly this day three weeks. Do you think, Mr. Garraty, he goes on, that when ye didn't care to look after y'er own interests, and I offering so fair for the field, I was going to wait upon you? I don't lose my papers in the Irish fashion. Well, that last set me up—and so I axed him if it was the pattern of his English breeding; and one word brought on another; and all the blood of my body rushed into my fist, and I had the ill luck to knock him down; and, the coward, what does he do but he takes the law o' me—and I was cast, and lost the sale of the wheat, and was ordered to pay ever so much money: well, I didn't care to pay it then, but gave an engagement; and I meant to see about it—but forgot: and all in a jiffy came a thing they call an execution—and to stop the cant, I was forced to borrow money from that tame negur, the exciseman, who'd sell the sowl out of his grandmother for sixpence (if indeed there ever was a sowl in the family)—and it's a terrible case to be paying *interest* for it still.

"But, Philip, you might give up or dispose of part of your farm. I know you could get a good sum of money for that rich meadow by the river."

"True for ye, ma'am dear, and I've been seeing about it for a long time, but somehow I have no luck. Just as ye came up, I was thinking to myself that the gale day is passed and all one as before, yarra a pin's worth have I for the rint! and the landlord wants it as bad as I do, though it's a shame to say that of a gentleman; for jist as he was seeing about some ould custodim, or something of the sort, that had been hanging over the estate ever since he came to it, the sheriff's officers put executioners in the house; and it is very sorrowful for both of us, if I may make bould to say so; for I'm sartin he'll be rackin me for the money, and, indeed, the ould huntsman tould me as much; but I must see about it; not indeed, that it's much good, for I've no luck."

"Let me beg of you, Philip, not to take such an idea into your head; do not lose a moment; you will be utterly ruined if you do. Why not apply to your father-in-law!—he is able to assist you; for at present you only suffer from temporary embarrassment."

"True for ye, that's good advice, my lady; and by the blessing of God, I'll see about it."

"Then go directly, Philip."

"Directly! I can't ma'am dear, on account of the pigs; and sorra a one I have but myself to keep them out of the cabbages; for I let the woman and the grawls go to the pattern at Killaun; it's litte pleasure they see the craturs."

"But your wife did not hear the huntsman's story?"

"Och! ay, did she, but unless she could give me a sheaf o' bank notes, where would be the good of her staying?—but I'll see about it."

"Immediately, then, Philip; think upon the ruin that may come—nay, that must come, if you neglect this matter; your wife, too—your family reduced from comfort to starvation—your home desolate—"

"Aye, my lady! don't be after breaking my heart intirely; thank God, I have seven as fine flahulagh children as ever peeled pratle, and all under twelve years old; and sure I'd lay down my life ten times over for every one of them; and to-morrow for sartin—no—to-morrow, the hurling; I can't to-morrow; but the day after, if I'm a living man, I'll see about it."

Poor Philip! his kindly feelings were valueless because of his unfortunate habit. Would that this were the only example I could produce of the ill-effects of that dangerous little sentence, "*I'll see about it!*" Oh! that the sons and daughters of the fairest island that ever heaved its green bosom above the surface of the ocean would arise and be doing what is to be done, and never again rest contented with "*SEEING ABOUT IT!*"

NATIONAL EMBLEMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR,—As your able correspondent, Terence O'Toole, has not as yet described that part of your emblematic engraving relating to Irish armour, I think a few extracts from works of Irish antiquarian research on that subject, may not in the mean time be mal apropos. As I see a cuirass in your frontispiece, I shall begin with Mr. Walker's observations on the ancient defensive armour of this country: he says, "It would seem that body armour of any kind was unknown to the Irish previous to the tenth century, as we find king Murkertach in that century obtaining the acitions name of Murkertach na Geochall Crocanum, for so obvious an invention as the leathern jacket;" and although poets of the middle ages describe the heroes of Oisín as shining in polished steel, no relic of that sort of armour has escaped the wreck of time in Ireland; and yet it is rather curious that coats of mail are mentioned in the Brehon laws, as the word mail is supposed to be derived from the Irish *Mala*. It is quite certain, however, that on the first invasion of the English, no sort of defensive armour, except the shield, or target, formed part of the paraphernalia of an Irish warrior. If they had been placed on any sort of an equality with their invaders, I flatter myself my countrymen would have kept their enemies longer at bay than, from their comparatively defenceless state, they were enabled to do. Smyth tells us, "That corslets of pure gold were found on the lands of Clontias in the county of Kerry;" but these were probably left there by the Spaniards, who had "a fortification called Fort del Oré, adjoining those lands." The shield of the ancient Irish was generally formed of wicker-work, but in many of the old poems we find the chiefs furnished not only with shields of burnished steel, but even those embossed with gold; and in the old poem of the Chase, the son of Morni is represented with a golden one; but whether or not these were taken from a foreign enemy, cannot now be determined.

It appears from some coins dug up in the Queen's County, in 1786, that helmets must have been in use previous to the tenth century, but how long, must also be a matter of conjecture. Mr. Walker mentions a golden helmet dug up in the county Tipperary; he describes it as resembling in form, a huntsman's cap (like the one in the engraving,*) with the leaf in front, divided equally and elevated, and the skull encompassed with a ribbon of gold crimped. (N.B. some of these relics of *old ancient times* might be useful in Dennybrook Fair in more cases than one now.) They are sometimes mentioned by the poet as studded with precious stones; but these are supposed to have been taken from foreigners. Some of their swords, however, of native manufacture are well known to have had hilts of gold, very richly ornamented with jewels. The hilts of these are of a variety of shapes, the cross hilts, however, prevail.

The battle-axe, was a very favourite weapon with the Irish. Cambrensis describes the manner of using it, he says, "they make use of but one hand when they strike, and extend the thumb along the handle, to guide the blow, from which neither the crested helmet can defend the head, or the iron folds of the armour, the body: whence it has happened sometimes that the whole thigh of a soldier, though cased in well tem-

pered steel, hath been lopped off at a single blow of the axe.' The spear was also a weapon in very general use, and Stanishurst, in his description of their manner of using them, says, "They grasp about the middle, heavy spears, which they do not hold pendant at their sides under their arms, but hurl them with all their strength over their heads;" and we may form some idea of the prodigious force which either custom or physical force enabled them to throw it, when Harris, in his *Hibernica*, mentions, "That no haubergeon, or coat of mail, was proof against their force, but were pierced through on both sides."

If Terence O'Toole does not give you any further information, I will return to the charge.

THE GHOST OF BRIAN BOROHME.

THE POTEEN.

Ireland has long been famous, or, as the Temperance Society men would say, *infamous*, for her love of the *bottle*. Now, without declaring ourselves on the side of the *abstinent* folks—without saying that we ought never to take a drop, and without binding ourselves never to be hearty over a tumbler of whiskey punch—we may venture to say, that it would be decidedly better for Ireland, in the long run, if she never had a distillery in the island. We say this on looking at the mischief which ardent spirits have always created in our isle. The misery, the degradation, the fightings, and even the murders, which it has been the fatal origin of, may well justify such a wish—if our countrymen could be brought just to take it *temperately*. A great alteration for the better has already taken place in this respect; and we sincerely trust that the improvement will be progressive. We extract the following account of a visit to a *Poteen Distiller* from "*Sketches in Ireland*," published by Curry and Co. of Dublin, and printed in 1827.

"One morning in July, as I was dressing myself to walk out before breakfast, I heard a noise at my back door; and observed one of my people remonstrating with a man who was anxiously pressing into the house. I went down and met the man whose demi-genteel dress and peculiar cut marked him to be a guager. 'O! for mercy's sake,' cried the man when he saw me, 'let me into your house; lock me up somewhere; hide me, save me, or my life is lost.' So I brought him in, begged of him to sit down, and offering him some refreshment, requested him to recover his courage, and come to himself, for there was no danger. While I was speaking, an immense crowd came up to the house, and surrounded it; and one man more forward than the rest, came up to the door, and demanded admission. On my speaking to him out of the window, and inquiring what his business was, he replied, 'We find you have got Mr. ———, the guager, in your house: you must deliver him up to us; we want him.' 'What do you want him for?' 'Oh, Doctor, that's no business for you to meddle in; we want him and must have him.' 'Indeed that I cannot allow; he is under my roof; he has come, claiming my hospitality, and I must and will afford it to him.' 'Doctor there are two words to that bargain: you ought to have consulted us before you promised; but to be plain with you, we really respect you very much; you are a quiet and a good man, and mind your own business; and we would make the man sore and sorry that would touch the hair of your head. But you must give us the guager; to be at a word with you doctor, we must tear open, or tear down your house, or get him.' What was I to do? What could I do?—nothing, I had not a gun or pistol in my house; 'so,' says I, 'boys, you must, it seems, do as you like, and mind I protest against what you are about; but since you must have your own way, as you are Irishmen, I demand fair play at your hands. The man had ten minutes law of you when he came to my house: let him have the same law still; let him not be the worse of the shelter he has taken here; do you, therefore, return to the hill at the rear of the house, and I will let him out at the hall door, and let him have his ten minutes law.' I thought that in those ten minutes, as he was young and healthy, that he would reach the river Lennan, about a quarter of a mile off, in front of the house, and swimming over it, escape. So they all agreed that the proposal was a fair one; at any rate, they promised to abide by it; and the man seeing the necessity of the case, consented to leave the house; I enlarged him at the hall door, the pursuers all true to their pledged honour, stood on a hill about two hundred yards in the rear of the house, a hanging lawn sloped

* See the Second Number.